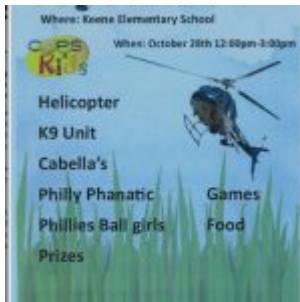


Troopers Say Thank You to Keene Elementary School









Newark – On Saturday, October 28, 2017 the Delaware State Police partnered with WDEL 101.7 FM, in hosting a “Cops and Kids” event to show appreciation to the students, staff and families of William B. Keene Elementary School, for their support of Troop 2 in the aftermath of the death of Cpl. Stephen Ballard.

In the days following, Keene Elementary School under the leadership of Principal Mariellen Taraboletti, proved to be good neighbors to the Troop 2 family on two specific occasions. On April 28th, two days after the tragic event, the students and staff of Keene, some 700 strong, formed a single file line and walked to Troop 2, to pay their respects, for Cpl. Ballard’s ultimate sacrifice. Once arriving at Troop 2, students and staff placed hand-made cards, flowers, balloons and other mementos at his patrol vehicle, which was on display at the main entrance. Then on May 4th, the school allowed a “Back the Blue” fundraising event to take place in their parking lot. The school not only allowed the use of their lot but members of the staff also volunteered in helping to place blue lines on vehicles. This 12 hour event raised over \$50,000 dollars for the Cpl. Stephen Ballard Memorial Fund and would not have been possible without the assistance of Keene Elementary School.

The “Cops and Kids” event which had the feel of a neighborhood block party combined with a carnival, served two purposes. The main reason for the event was to allow the Delaware State Police to say thank you to Keene Elementary School, but it was also an opportunity for Troopers to interact with the community that we serve in a fun, informal atmosphere. These interactions go a long way to breaking down barriers, developing relationships and building strong partnerships between law enforcement and the community, specifically the youth in those communities.

The three hour event which took place on the grounds of Troop 2, featured a visit by eight Disney princesses from ‘Pursuit For Peace”, moon bounces provided by Inflatables-R-Fun, an inflatable archery range provided by Cabela’s, music by WSTW 93.7 FM, demonstrations by the Delaware State Police Helicopter and K-9 Unit as well as food and snacks provided by Malin’s Market. There were also special stuffed animal giveaways courtesy of PetSmart.

The highlight of the event was a visit from the Phillie Phanatic, who posed for pictures and gave hugs and high fives to everyone. Before leaving, the Phanatic made a special presentation to Cpl. Ballard’s widow, Louise Cummings and her daughter Abigail who were also in attendance. On behalf of the Philadelphia Phillies the Phanatic presented Louise and Abby with 2 MVP tickets to a future game, batting practice passes and a Phillies jersey bearing the number 2.

In closing, Troop 2 Commander, Captain Jason Sapp thanked the school as well as everyone who made the event possible. He also reminded us to not be discouraged by the voices of those who look to divide law enforcement and the community, they are just the “vocal minority”. It’s the “quiet majority” who stand with the men and women in law enforcement on a daily basis and through their actions, ultimately send the loudest message.

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